



UK withholds IMF funding

The UK is withholding £50m of funding to the World Bank in protest at the conditions it attaches to loans and grants, namely forcing poor countries to adopt an economic policy that includes liberalising markets and selling off public services. This undermines the capacity of governments to manage their affairs.

The Bank has the fight against corruption as its major focus, but UK International Development Secretary Hilary Benn says the Bank has a duty to help those in poverty despite the actions of their governments. Last year the UK provided £1.3bn to the World Bank to help poorer countries, and promised to donate a further £50m in 2007, provided it eased the strings attached to aid. However, Mr Benn has said he will now delay handing over the money until he is satisfied the World Bank has eased its position on economic liberalisation. For more, see http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2006/09/14/business/EU_GEN_Britain_World_Bank.php.





Governments must provide essential services



An Oxfam report, **In the Public Interest: health, education, and water and sanitation for all** shows that developing countries will only achieve healthy and educated populations if their governments take responsibility for providing essential services that are well staffed, affordable and accessible to all. The report says the trend for the aid programmes of rich countries to encourage private provision of, for example, water supplies, has a tendency to deprive the poorest parts of society of their basic needs. Civil society organisations and private companies can make important contributions, but they must be properly regulated and integrated into strong public systems, and not seen as substitutes for them. See more on

http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/briefingpapers/bp_public_interest

GDF Suez merger: Non!



The French parliament is currently debating the proposed merger of the public gas company GDF with the multinational Suez. The merger would effectively mean the end of public gas distribution in France, as the GDF would, during the operation, become a private shareholder company. The government's stake would be cut from 80.2% to 34%. The left-wing opposition party is doing its utmost to prevent the bill from going through until the next presidential elections in 2007. They have presented 137,449 amendments to the bill and provoked several interruptions to the daily sessions of parliament. If all the amendments are discussed, it could take more than eight years to pass the bill. Among the employees of GDF, 94% have voted against the merger. On 11 and 12 September, workers held demonstrations across the country in protest against the plans. Some held mock "marriages" between GDF and EDF, the electricity company that was privatized in 2005. See more on http://www.rfi.fr/actufr/articles/081/article_45980.asp.

El Salvador ratifies core ILO conventions

On August 29, after many years of lobbying from labour organisations, the government of El Salvador ratified ILO Conventions 87, 98, 135 and 151, guaranteeing workers' right to organise

and collective bargaining. The ratification was also a prerequisite to maintain preferential tariffs granted by the European Union. The Congress approved amendments to the Civil Service law that authorise the establishment of more than one union per institution, and extends the right to organise and negotiate working agreements to other sectors such as police and legal service employees. Though this is a victory for the labour movement in El Salvador, the new bill also introduced regulations denying trade unions the right to join federations, and it failed to explicitly forbid management from interfering with unions. Despite these restrictions, the ratifications are, according to Ricardo Calderon, secretary general of El Salvador's workers' confederation, a historic step in the right direction.

Half of all migrants are women



A new UN report says women and girls make up half of all international migrants, totalling 95 million. The State of the World Population report, **A Passage to Hope: Women and International Migration**, calls on governments and individuals to recognise and value the contributions of migrant women, and promote and respect their human rights. Migrant women sent an estimated \$232bn back to their home countries last year and even though they earn less than men, they send a higher proportion of their income to their families back home. See <http://www.unfpa.org/swp/>.

Korea: Health union signs industrial agreement



After several months of negotiations and a nationwide strike, PSI's affiliate the Korean Health and Medical Workers' Union (KHMWU) has successfully signed the first-ever industrial agreement with hospital employers. The agreement covers: the creation of a tripartite health sector committee; the organisation of a joint management/union health policy campaign; regularising the situation of informal and subcontracted workers; an increase in staff to allow for a five-day working week; the creation of National Health Insurance information desks and childcare facilities within hospitals; strengthening occupational health and safety measures and wage increases of between 3.5% and 5.54%.

Women influence UN reform



The UN and international community have recognised that gender equality is critical to the achievement of all Millennium Development Goals. Too often, however, there is insufficient implementation of the various gender equality commitments and funding for gender equality work within both mainstream agencies and women's specific mechanisms such as UNIFEM. All that should change this year after the action of a High-Level Coherence Panel. Women from a large range of groups are advocating for the creation of a well-resourced independent UN entity with normative, operational and oversight capacity, a universal country presence and led by an Under-Secretary General. PSI is supporting this initiative, as is PSI Canadian affiliate NUPGE. For more information, visit www.wedo.org.

Reform of Municipal Services

PSI affiliates in Central Europe held two conferences on reform of municipal services (Serbia in 2005 and in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2006). A joint declaration will be reported to the PSI Executive Board and to the relevant ILO bodies. Among the affiliates' claims are:



- reform should be managed in such a way that full consultation and participation of trade unions is ensured
- the process must be transparent to the public and to the workers
- legal regulations must correspond to European Union law.

A number of affiliates plan to develop a subregional confederation of municipal trade unions in order to respond to the challenges of restructuring in the sector, an initiative that is strongly supported by PSI.



What Workers Want

This book, first published in 1999, has been re-issued in 2006 with additional data. According to its authors, Richard B. Freeman and Joel Rogers, if employees could design the workplace, it would be an organisation run jointly by employees and their supervisors, where disputes between labour and management would be resolved through independent arbitration. More than anything, workers want their voices to be heard. They desire a greater role in the workplace (but doubt management's willingness to share power), and have strong ideas about how their involvement could improve not just their lot but also their companies' fortunes. Many non-union workers favour the formation of unions, and virtually all union workers strongly support their union. Most employees support the creation of labour-management committees - to which workers would elect their representatives - to run the organisation and settle conflicts. See

IFI meetings: some civil groups banned



In the lead-up to the annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF, taking place in Singapore on 19-20 September, authorities in Singapore have barred some civil society representatives who want to participate in the meeting from entering the country. A joint press release from seven US-based civil society organisations says that the crackdown on civil society threatens the credibility of the IFIs and "...raise[s] questions about the sincerity of the Bank's commitment to guaranteeing that civil society has a voice in development debates." A planned trade union event scheduled to take place in Singapore during the annual meetings has thus far not been threatened.

International Labour Review special issue on migration



The ILO has just published a new series of in-depth articles about global migration for work. Produced by experts in their respective fields, the articles in the special issue of the International Labour Review (ILR) highlight such issues as temporary migration programmes, the globalization of the labour market for health-care professionals, China's strategies to reverse the brain drain, and the effects of immigration on the employment of nationals in Italy. The High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development took place on 14-15 September at UN Headquarters, at the opening of the General Assembly's 61st Session. The table of contents of the International Labour Review, including abstracts of the articles, is available at:

www.ilo.org/public/english/support/publ/revue/sommaire/145-1-2.htm.

World AIDS Conference, Toronto



"HIV/AIDS is a work place issue" was the main message coming from a demonstration organized by hotel workers, local UNITE HERE! representatives, and trade unionists attending the World AIDS Conference (13-18 August). Over fifty workers were suspended by their employers, the Delta Chelsea Hotel, for wearing their union badge over the HIV/AIDS red ribbon. Alan Leather, PSI's Deputy General Secretary, was part of the delegation that met with the

hotel management to demand the reinstatement of the suspended workers. There was considerable media coverage that questioned the management's decision, and within 12 hours they agreed to reinstate the workers. The trade union delegation in Toronto, including two from PSI, Nelouise Geyer, HIV/AIDS Coordinator, Southern Africa and Jean-Marie Ndi, Cameroon, took every opportunity during the World AIDS Conference to bring to delegates' attention that HIV/AIDS is indeed a workplace issue. Trade unions are responding to the challenge but more needs to be done. See http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20060813/aids_hotel_workers_060818/20060818/

Assistance for Lebanon



After a number of requests from unions on the best way to channel solidarity assistance to Lebanon, the Global Union Federations have decided to propose that assistance be sent via the Lebanese Red Cross, which is a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) (see www.ifrc.org/where/country/cn6.asp?countryid=101). Donations may be made by the national Red Cross/Red Crescent body in your country, or via the IFRC using the following Internet address: <http://donate.ifrc.org>. You can also contact the Lebanese Red Cross via www.dm.net.lb/redcross/. Given the huge need for humanitarian assistance, all contributions will be gratefully received.

Stand up against poverty!



As part of the Global Month of Action against poverty, on **15-16 October** there will be a global attempt to set an official Guinness World Record for the biggest number of people ever to Stand Up Against Poverty. The event has been organised by the Millennium Campaign to raise awareness of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to publicly demonstrate to policy makers the growing global support for the achievement of the MDGs. All workers are invited to stand up against poverty for one minute between 10am (GMT) on 15 October and 10am (GMT) on 16 October. For details of how to organise your Stand Up, see <http://www.millenniumcampaign.org/site/pp.asp?c=grKVL2NLE&b=2024079>.

There you go!



Indigenous and tribal peoples have to contend with external forces (political, economic, cultural), which threaten their collective survival, including their use of traditional lands and territories. This online picture book by Oren Ginzburg for Survival International puts into perspective the attempts from western countries to "develop" tribal peoples. To read the book, go to <http://www.survival-international.org/thereyougoenter.php?/FONT> and click on the arrow at the bottom of the page.



Joint ILO-IFC programme to monitor labour standards

The ILO and the IFC (International Finance Corporation) have announced that they will work together in a "Better Work Programme" which will develop tools for labour standards monitoring and remediation systems. A joint communique states that the programme will involve pilot projects in three regions and intends to build on the success of the ILO's involvement in the Better Factories Cambodia programme, which worked to improve compliance with international labour standards in Cambodian garment factories. The projects will also take place in plantations, electronics and light manufacturing. Since 1 May 2006, all new IFC loans include the requirement that the borrowing company must abide by the ILO's core labour standards. Read the communique here: www.world-psi.org/content6



Letter to G20 trade ministers

PSI has signed on to this letter to all G20 trade ministers, who met in Rio De Janeiro on 8 September. The letter calls on them, in the 'reflection' that all trade ministers have been asked to undertake on the suspension of the WTO Doha Round, to reject any resumption of the negotiations on the current basis. Rather, they should start again, with a new agenda that really does respect development needs that will meet the concerns of the majority of the world's population. For the full text of the letter see www.world-psi.org/G20.

Keep waste services in local government hands



The ASU, PSI affiliate in Australia, has an ongoing campaign to keep waste services under local government control, after a Productivity Commission report recommended that they be shifted to state government oversight. The ASU believes the shift would affect the quality of the service and result in job losses. In its response to the Productivity Commission, ASU commented that local government is the best organisation to provide for essential health needs through waste services because it is closest to the community and therefore the most responsive to its needs. Local government staff provide a high quality service - the sector enjoys higher rates of pay and better conditions of employment that attract the best people and keep them longer. Safety issues for the community are best handled by long term council waste staff as they are more familiar with local road conditions, difficult local streets, where the pedestrian crossings are, as well as the routes children walk to school - all making communities safer as well as cleaner places. See more on http://www.asu.asn.au/media/localgovt/20060828_waste.html



Focus on health

PSI has developed a new electronic newsletter on health, available in English, French and Spanish, covering issues on health sector reform, HIV/AIDS, nursing, and giving examples from around the world. If you would like to receive the newsletter, please contact communications@world-psi.org. The first edition of the newsletter can be downloaded from the PSI website in English on www.world-psi.org/focus_on_health_1. (French and Spanish to follow shortly).

Union-busting: the truth



Have you heard of the Anti-Union Network? They're the people in the US who make up the well-coordinated, well-funded effort to limit workers' ability to join together in unions. American Rights at Work is firing back by launching a new website that exposes the network of people, organisations and funders trying to restrict workers' rights. See www.AntiUnionNetwork.org.



Guinea ministers lose luxury cars

Ministers in Guinea are no longer authorized to drive their luxury four-wheel drive vehicles. The President had the cars confiscated, a measure which is appreciated by the public, who hope it will lead to more economic reforms. One

Conakry resident said, "I only hope the government will take similar decisions on other areas to put things straight." Inflation in Guinea has hit 30% and most households can hardly afford a meal a day. The politicians can now be seen driving much smaller cars.

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